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The Editors' Page

PARENTS usually have very clearly in mind what they want from their children in the way of truth. The difficulties they see are childish extremes—either marked deviations and open evasion, or brutal frankness. More rarely are they concerned with how *they* themselves speak—and act—the truth to their children. Yet child life is colored very early by the real or fancied evasiveness of grown-ups, if not by their direct untruths. "We'll see" in answer to a child's request instead of a frank yes or no leaves its acid mark. In conformity with behaviorist psychology, other parents attempt to develop truthful speaking as a habit like washing the hands or coming promptly to meals. But truth speaking depends upon the integration of a total personality and is far more pervasive and extensive than any group of habits.

LIKE the child, the adult is subject to "wishful thinking," the tendency to interpret things as he wishes them, and to the process of rationalizing, which finds plausible reasons for doing something the real motives for which may not be consciously acceptable. These processes are more marked, or at least more crudely evident in the child, because of his lack of knowledge, because of his greater insecurity, because of his absolute dependence and his urgent need of making himself acceptable to his parents as well as to himself.

AS parents we must learn to recognize these needs and processes in our children and in ourselves. We must help each child to accept himself. By our own efforts toward truth we shall be giving him a basis for accepting others.

Cécile Pilpel

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